

Capital Improvements Subcommittee Minutes
Friday, February 12, 2016
8:00 AM – 10:15 AM
4th Floor Conference Room, Town Hall

Capital Improvements Subcommittee Members present: David Pollak (Chairman), Barbara Scotto, and Rebecca Stone.

Capital Improvements Subcommittee Members absent: Ms. Charlupski.

Other School Committee Members present: Susan Wolf Ditkoff.

School Staff present: Joe Connelly, Mary Ellen Dunn, Ben Lummis, Matt Gillis, and Robin Coyne.

Others Present: Carla Benka (Advisory Committee), Cliff Brown (Town Meeting Member Precinct 14), Mark Gray (Town Meeting Member Precinct 7), and Richard Nangle (Town Meeting Member Precinct 15 and Friends of Dane Park).

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM.

Ms. Dunn introduced Director of Operations Matt Gillis.

1) Further Consideration of Draft Public Schools of Brookline Infrastructure and Facility Plan

Ms. Dunn presented the draft Infrastructure and Facility Plan FY 2016-FY 2022 (Attachment A). A companion document, complete enrollment report showing future trends, will be available in the fall. Members requested October 1, February/March, and June updates; longitudinal data; and churn by school. Ms. Dunn will make revisions to the draft Infrastructure and Facility Plan (including changing the headers) and will send it to Ms. Benka for distribution to the Advisory Committee. Ms. Dunn's cover email will note that the document represents a concept under development and that she would appreciate feedback.

2) Consideration of 9th School Site Selection Next Steps

Mr. Lummis provided an update on the February 9, 2016 Building Commission meeting on 9th school site selection. Acting as Chairman, George Cole supported the idea of the School Department drafting a Request for Quotation (RFQ) for the concept studies and then having the Building Department review it and make sure it is not missing anything. Because everyone acknowledged that crafting an RFP for siting a new school is something that no one in Brookline has done before, Ms. Dunn will first reach out to peers in other districts who have sited a new school recently to get RFP examples. Decisions: 1) Building can help craft the RFQ so that we can get architectural services to get the information needed on the feasibility of the sites; 2) The studies would result in a conceptual plan with basic costs for development; and 3) Recommendation that we bifurcate the project so we identify an architectural firm only to do the studies and then have a separate process to identify the firm that would create final plans and take us through construction.

The Subcommittee discussed the Baldwin site.

Comments:

Ms. Stone: Baldwin needs to be a part of the RFQ, but there was extensive HMFH study during the B-SPACE process. It is an underutilized site. Ms. Dunn will attach past studies to the RFQ to avoid duplication of effort.

Ms. Scotto: Does not think Baldwin is viable as a 9th elementary site, unless it is a magnet school. We would need to budget for busing.

Mr. Pollak: Should the RFQ look at whether Baldwin could be part of the high school solution? We need more footprint for the high school. Options might include 111 Cypress Street, Old Lincoln School, or building new on another site, including the ones being considered for a 9th elementary school.

Ms. Stone: Consider the possibility of a high school facility at Baldwin that could accommodate 600-700 students. The location could serve both North and South Brookline, has parking, has access to public transportation for high school age students, and is close to Pine Manor's gym and art center, which we already rent.

Mr. Pollak: We would need to inform the school architect of the intended use(s). The consultants will need to have a landscape architect on the team.

Ms. Stone: The consultant should consider both elementary and high school options at Baldwin and both Baker options – expand existing facility and build separate facility.

Ms. Dunn: Need clarification on what goes into the RFQ and what gets referenced in the RFQ.

Mr. Pollak: Need to do our work with boards and commissions including Parks and Recreation and Conservation. Town Counsel is looking at legal issues. Need more community conversations.

The Subcommittee discussed Article 97 implications.

Comments:

Mr. Pollak: Need a more detailed response from Town Counsel?

Ms. Stone: No definitive answer. There will always be trade-offs. Don't think Dane Park is a good option, but not because of Article 97. She would take it off the list.

Ms. Scotto: Agreed that Dane Park should be taken off the list.

Mr. Pollak: The 2015 Open Space Plan will not list Dane Park as being under Article 97 due to recent changes in case law. Town Counsel's earlier memo implied that it is the only park open legally to development of a school.

The Subcommittee discussed the RFQ.

Comments:

Ms. Stone: Analyze current traffic and circulation patterns for the three sites; estimate additional number of vehicles and impact on circulation patterns in the morning and afternoon and the potential impact on the neighborhoods.

Mr. Pollak: To the extent that challenges are identified, identify and cost conceptual level mitigation strategies.

Ms. Dittkoff: Identify what staff is doing. Include potential mitigation and address geotechnical, preservation, legal ramifications (Article 97, eminent domain, and any other restrictions and title). Need to work with the community and Town Meeting members and other boards and commissions, e.g., Parks and Recreation, Conservation, Advisory Committee, Transportation, Planning.

Dr. Connelly: Produce one final report that incorporates staff and consultant work.

Mr. Pollak: Be cautious about the need for geotechnical studies, which are very expensive (\$50,000 per site).

Ms. Dunn: Need to know about prior uses (civil engineer). The gas station at the Stop & Shop was recently renovated. They would have pulled permits that required analysis.

Mr. Gray: Expressed concerns about the Stop & Shop site, both as a mixed use and single use site. Many people use the supermarket.

Mr. Pollak: Possible schedule – draft RFQ in March, award contract in early spring, draft report in August, final report in September, public hearings for a month, Board decision in October, November Town Meeting.

Ms. Dittkoff: Need to be clear on the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) assumptions for the 9th elementary school and high school.

Ms. Dunn: A revised CIP will be issued on February 16, 2016.

3) Consideration of 2016 Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Statement of Interest (SOI)

Ms. Dittkoff: Need to vote so that staff knows whether to spend the next six weeks preparing an SOI. SOIs are due in April 8. Ms. Benka reported that the Advisory Committee discussed Mr. Pollak's hybrid proposal (does not propose pursuing MSBA participation on either of these projects; suggests possible partnering on 111 Cypress Street).

Mr. Pollak: We have a well-functioning high school today that can manage 2000 students. We project we will need space for an additional 600-800 students. We should aspire to purpose built facilities to replace those most needed and make alterations to existing facilities to rebalance. His proposal does not reach to programming and doesn't talk about geography/proximity. He sees a range of options (medium-annexing Old Lincoln School or larger-using Baldwin). We could build a cutting edge new facility and do what is necessary with the existing facilities (because of limited resources).

Ms. Dittkoff: If we don't pursue MSBA funding for the high school, we wouldn't pursue a full renovation. She referred to the SMMA report. Current facilities can hold 2,000 students. We are assuming we will have 2,700 students. Some pieces of the existing facilities would need to be addressed, e.g., the science labs. She has reservations about 111 Cypress Street as the solution (transportation, parking, circulation).

Ms. Benka: The study process will take nine months. We are assuming we could do something in the next nine months if we don't have MSBA restrictions.

Ms. Dittkoff: Staff will be looking at the SMMA Report pros and cons and looking at real options. We could ask SMMA to do one more feedback session.

The Subcommittee discussed whether to vote to recommend that School Committee not submit an SOI in April 2016. Mr. Pollak noted the benefits of the MSBA process. The Subcommittee discussed whether to make the vote contingent on CIP funds being available to begin a feasibility study. Ms. Dittkoff noted that the CIP won't be voted until May 2016.

On a motion of Ms. Stone and seconded by Ms. Scotto, the Capital Improvements Subcommittee voted unanimously to recommend to the School Committee that the Town Administrator not submit an SOI in April 2016.

4) Approve Minutes of the February 4, 2016 Capital Improvements Subcommittee Meeting

On a motion of Ms. Stone and seconded by Ms. Scotto, the Capital Improvements Subcommittee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2016 Capital Improvements Subcommittee meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 AM.